

Living Water

A quarterly publication of the Five Rivers District

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 1



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“We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do.”

“Joy is prayer— Joy is strength—Joy is love—Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls.”

Mother Teresa

The Word By Marvé Ralston

Understanding God’s word for ones self should be a goal for us all. This year I decided to get serious about my bible study habits.

I grew up going to church and Sunday school. It was simply a “given” that we would be going. Church attendance was not an option, right up to when I left my parent’s home to get married at twenty-one.

The bible stories were so full of life. My sisters and I would dress up and have plays for our folks, acting the stories out. One of our favorites was King Solomon when he had to make the decision about the two different women who both claimed a newborn as their own. We loved Joseph and the coat of many colors, and Baby Moses hidden in the bulrushes. However, these were stories from another time and place. The world was so different in “bible times”.

Then I went through my teens, I was searching and the bible just seemed so hard to comprehend, and harder still, to live out. Those were the dark years, I simply turned away and went my own direction. I would definitely pray when I wanted or needed anything. I would occasionally throw a prayer someone else’s way.

God was speaking to me through Christian music groups, The Second Chapter of Acts, The Imperials, and other popular religious music groups at the time. For comfort, or when I needed answers, I picked up the bible. God always spoke and convicted me to dig deeper.

Still I resisted, and would often try to make the scriptures “work” into my life. I prayed and sought out a Christian spouse. I eventually found my husband who attended the church I had grown up in, while he attended K-State. Was our marriage easier because we were both believers? I will save that for another column.

(continued on page 4)

May 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

June 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

July 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Events:

May 13 Lay Servant Ministries Board Meeting Baldwin 1st Library

May 18 Volunteer Work Day at Camp Chippewa. Link below

<http://campchippewa.org/files/2019/03/2019-Volunteer-Work-Day-Flyer-1.pdf>

May 21 Clergy Meeting 9 a.m. to noon Ottawa 1st UMC

May 29-June 1st Great Plains Annual Conference

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/annual-conference-registration>

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/annual-conference-schedule>

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/aclodging>

Questions? Call Julie Kohr at 785-414-4217 or email jkohr@greatplainsumc.org

June 21 United Methodist Family Night at the "K"
28th Annual—Great Plains & Missouri UMMen invite families to enjoy a fun night of baseball. Link below

[https://www.greatplainsumc.org/files/ummen/2019+royals+night+flyer+\(june\).pdf](https://www.greatplainsumc.org/files/ummen/2019+royals+night+flyer+(june).pdf)

June 24-29 UMY Institute
A week of spiritual growth and faith for senior high youth held on the campus of Baker University. Link below

<https://campchippewa.org/institute/>
GP Calendar link below:

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/events>

WHY WE APPORTION

Many of you received an email from our Treasurer, Scott Brewer about apportionments. Below is a link to more information about what apportionments are for those of you not really sure what their function is.

The United Methodist Church uses a funding system in which each local church pays a portion of the cost of funding the denomination's ministries at the conference, national and international levels. The system is called "apportionment" because each church pays a portion. To learn more about the apportionment system, use the link below with more information.

http://s3.amazonaws.com/Website_UMCGiving/resource-files/Why_We_Apportion.pdf

You can even find out exactly where your apportioned funds currently go.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/conferencegivingresources>

Scott Brewer our treasurer gave the below additional piece of information for those of you that were confused with the "choice" of giving to one or more of the apportioned ministries and not the others.

"The memo is not intended to recommend that churches stop fully supporting all of the conference and denominational ministries supported by the Mission Shares. Indeed, any church that does not fully support all seven general funds and the conference mission shares at the full 100% level will not be given credit for fully paying their Mission Shares. Nevertheless, churches are provided by the Discipline the right to remit their funds to the various funds separately, as I believe was the case all of our predecessor conferences prior to the 2014 unification. "

Scott Brewer
Treasurer & Director of Administration
The Great Plains Conference
of The United Methodist Church
785-272-9111

Thank you to all churches that faithfully pay their apportionments as well as those that are working towards increasing their percentage paid.

The United Methodist Church 101 and daily devotions:

Are you interested in learning more about the UMC? There are a number of tools available to you. You can start with the free ones on the UMC.org website

There are more resources available on the upperroom.org website including a daily devotion.

Sign up for the Great Plains devotional at greatplainsumc.org

The Word (continued from pg 1)

However, it was in college that I began in earnest to seek out God's call on my life. I began attending bible study once a week with my soon to be spouse. We attended with a group of about sixteen college students. One by one, we all seemed to find "our person", and get married. We all moved to new places as we graduated college. So began the next phase of our lives.

Within several years, we began a family. Being a young parent does not leave much quiet time for reading the bible. Once again, I would pick up a devotional book and skip around in the scriptures. Sometimes I would read Romans, Acts, or James, (some of my favorites,) and try to apply the meaning to my life.

As an older parent, and further on in my life, I started taking Disciple Bible Studies. Disciple Bible Studies are in-depth studies of the scripture. I really enjoyed them and got many of my questions answered. This seemed to be the best way to "force" myself to be diligent, as if I did not, it was embarrassing to attend the classes without my book filled out and unable to answer any questions.

During times when no Disciple study was offered in our church, I would start again, and again, with the "Read the Bible in a Year" book that I had purchased. I would usually make it to February. About the time God was giving Moses the instructions for how the Israelites were to live, I got lost and disinterested.

So what is going through my head this year? I turned sixty. Folks have already begun coming to me for answers. Do I have them? *I'm not always sure.* I would like to have answers to the tough questions.

So I started seriously setting some time aside for reading the bible, praying and even meditation to clear my head of all the garbage, that wanders through it. I began January 1st, and have been able to find this time most days. There have only been a few when I got behind. I try to catch up as soon after that happens as possible. I am already further along than I have ever been, in my "Read the Bible in a Year" book. My appointed time to get up is now between five and six am. I find that if I wait until the end of the day, I am too tired to stick with my promise to myself. Of course, that happens best when I get to bed on time, still something tough for me. I think it has to do with when our kids were little and I treasured the time after they were tucked safely into bed, as "my time."

I have several books on studying the bible including my "Read the Bible in a Year." I got them all out. Unless you are a book nerd like me, you would think I was a book hoarder. There are a number of choices at the online bookstore Cokesbury.com. You can even download many book resources on a Kindle.

To add to my journey into the Word, I saw an interesting class on BeADisciple.com, an online Christian Education site, the end of February. I was recovering from surgery and had some time to research things out. Three weeks of rest and recovery to be exact. I signed up for a class titled "How to Study the Bible" that began March 4th, to go along with my daily devotions, bible reading, prayer and meditation.

To make matters even more interesting, there was another class on the site that interested me about teaching evangelism. I decided to take another three hours of CEU's that covered six weeks and overlapped a bit. Therefore, in the course of five weeks, I will complete five CEU's. Each CEU equals 10 hours of classwork.

The Word (continued from page 4)

The very week that my class started, along with my new teacher that was using her own seminary class assignments, complete with a syllabus and a themed paper; I had care giving issues to handle for my mom.

My mom has always said, "You make time for what is important to you."

I throw that in to say, at any age, we all have very legitimate reasons we get off track. The key is to get back on track as soon as possible. We need to get back to our routine. Most importantly, to keep learning and reading the bible ~ whatever our level. Just do it! Moreover, do not follow my example. Take the reading and study material in baby steps. It is easier to digest that way.

The class on how to study the bible was very intense. I would often have a very informational chapter of material to read every night, plus several videos to watch, and then answer questions. This took a lot more time and energy than my previous online classes. Still, I finished several weeks ago, including the paper. It has been a bit painful as I admit, my brain does not retain what I read as well as it used to. I have not written a paper in twenty years...

The class on evangelism is more interactive. However, I am writing a paper and a PowerPoint for that one as well. They both are very good at helping me mature as a disciple. I am glad I took them and look forward to taking more in the future.

God sees our struggles; I like to think he helps us with every step along the way. I want to be someone that is moving closer to God and definitely not further away. For me, the only way to do this is through daily bible reading, prayer, meditation and fellowship with believers. I see that taking these classes has limited my fellowship outside the classes a bit. Another thing to work on.

With all that is happening in the world, the UMC, and our local churches, we are truly desperate for God and his true knowledge. I pray that you ***all*** are with me on this; ***we must be in the Word, praying, staying connected with other believers and doing our part.***

It is very easy to glide through issues we are not sure about, and hold on to our opinions. We need to back up our opinions with scripture, not taken out of context or interpreted without discernment. ***Most of us are beyond the spoon-fed-baby stage of Christianity, right? Troubling times call for educated disciples!***

Ask me near the end of this year how I am doing. My desire is to be able to say, I did it. I completed a year of imperfect but diligent bible study this year. I feel a deeper relationship with our Lord.

Please know, I will not have all the answers. I hope to be closer. God is not finished with me by a long shot. Please keep me in your prayers! Email or write me your tips and plans or any good bible study resources. Write a book review for our newsletter or share your testimony. We need to be sharing what God is doing in our lives. I will pray for you as well. We can do this together.



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The Discipline: forming the UMC

The Book of Discipline as the instrument for setting forth the laws, plan, polity, and process by which United Methodist govern themselves remains constant.

This book contains many paragraphs that all hold information about how the church is to handle specific situations.

It is refined and amended during General Conference. It contains over 200 years of General Conference decisions.

“From The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church-2016. Copyright©2016 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.”

You can find a current copy (2016) at Cokesbury.com or perhaps your pastor has a copy you can look through.

Social Principles of the United Methodist Church:

¶ 160-166 in *The Discipline*.

“At their best, the Social Principles articulate our ethical aspirations for the common good in our public policies and personal commitments.”

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